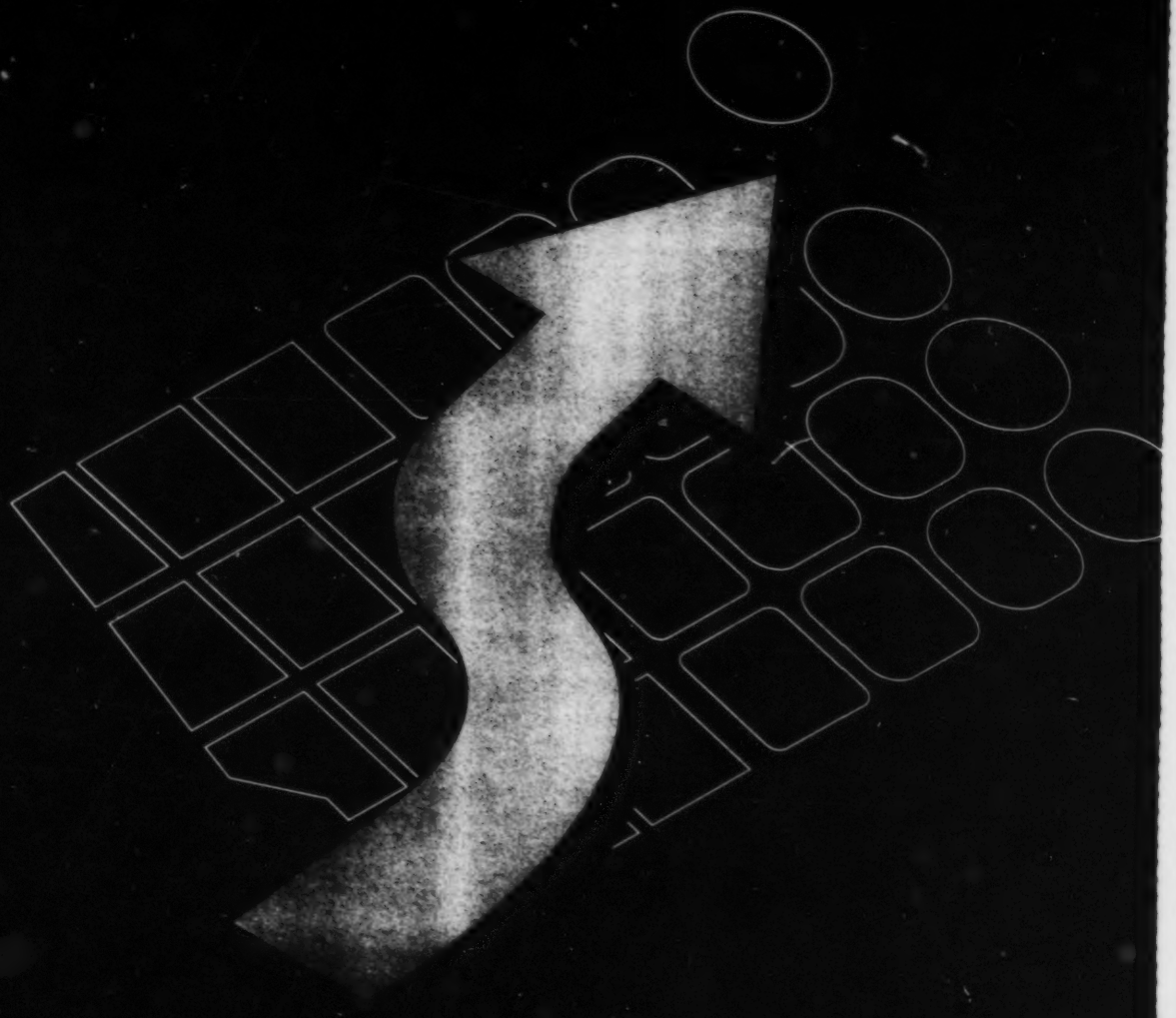

The Premier's Council on the Status of Persons with Disabilities

Annual Report 1990-91

Alberta
SENIORS

Also responsible for
ALBERTA ALCOHOL AND DRUG ABUSE COMMISSION
FAMILY LIFE AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE FOUNDATION
MICHENER CENTRE
PREMIER'S COUNCIL ON THE STATUS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES
SENIOR'S ADVISORY COUNCIL OF ALBERTA

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The Honourable Don Getty
Premier of Alberta
307 Legislature Building
Edmonton, Alberta
T5K 2B6

Dear Sir:

I have the honour to present the third Annual Report of the Premier's Council on the Status of Persons with Disabilities. This report covers the fiscal year ending March 31, 1991.

Respectfully submitted,

Roy Brassard
Minister Responsible for the
Premier's Council on the
Status of Persons with Disabilities

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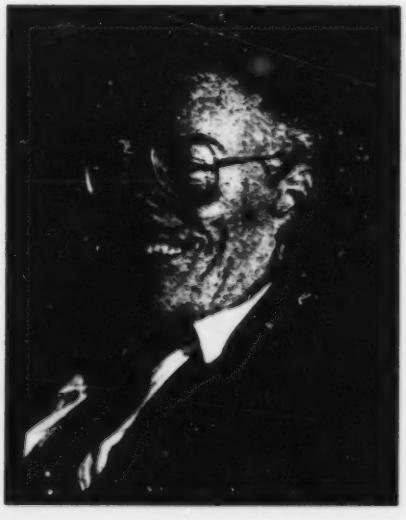
Message From the Chairman

The Premier's Council on the Status of Persons with Disabilities has completed the third year of its ten year mandate. Without doubt, the past year was a pivotal one for the Council, with the release of the *Action Plan* and the subsequent development of many positive paths for people with disabilities.

In this message I will briefly review some of the events of 1990-91. The articles within this report and Executive Director Eric Boyd's message will more thoroughly describe the year's activities. Following my brief review, I will touch on some of the broader issues affecting people with disabilities in the 1990s.

It is important to first note that the Council is in the unique—and perhaps sometimes difficult—position of not being a formal part of any government department or community agency. It is somewhere in between, as it is responsible to both sectors for its work and credibility.



The past year saw a great deal of effort going towards educating politicians, policy analysts and program administrators on the merits of the Council's *Action Plan* recommendations. The goal was to have the provincial government, through Cabinet, adopt the *Action Plan* as its direction for the 1990s. This goal has largely been accomplished.

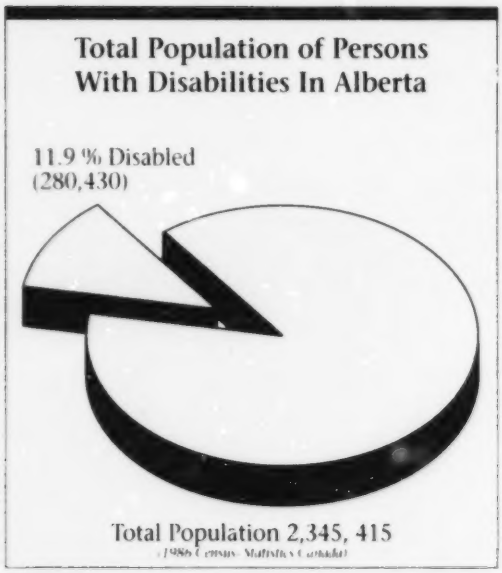
In addition to these lobbying efforts, the Council emphasized clearly in its recommendations to the provincial government the need to expand the Home Care program to people under 65 years of age, and also the need to make the Alberta Aids to Daily Living Program more fair and equitable.

Thus far, *Action Plan* recommendations have been implemented or are in the process of being implemented by various government departments. For example, there has been the establishment of the Barrier Free Transportation Committee, the Interdepartmental Working Group on Services to Persons with Brain Injury, and the Review of Yellowhead Integrated Services.

Progress with regards to *Action Plan* recommendations has been positive, and consumers, stakeholders and Council Members are supportive of the changes taking place. But let us not forget that changing public opinion is a difficult, time-consuming task. Traditionally, as noted in the June 1989 *Vision Statement*, persons

with disabilities have been treated in a paternalistic fashion, with public policy assuming that they need to be cured or, in the absence of a cure, continually cared for and protected.

This way of thinking has been pervasive and, consequently, most non-disabled persons have had little, if any, contact with people with disabilities. Non-disabled people have had difficulty understanding the needs of people with disabilities and they, along with government, agencies and caregivers, have often failed to see how persons with disabilities can live full, successful lives alongside non-disabled Albertans.



In the 1990s, these attitudes are changing slowly. More frequently, people with disabilities are recognized as equals, and as partners with a fundamental right to voice their views on the way in which they live their lives.

In this province, leadership has been demonstrated with the establishment of the Premier's Council and the development of the Vision paper and *Action Plan*. Alberta continues its consultative approach to implementation of *Action Plan* recommendations.

In the next year and beyond, the Council will focus more of its efforts on increasing the participation of persons with disabilities in this process of positive change. We will look to individuals for input and ideas on the Council's work. Only through province-wide input can the Council forge ahead, confident in the knowledge that the requests of persons with disabilities are truly being heard and met.

I take this opportunity to thank Premier Don Getty, the Honourable Jim Dinning, Members of the Premier's Council and the Secretariat, as well as the many representatives from both government and the community who have worked with the Council in the past year. As you all know, many challenges lie ahead. But I am confident that we will all do our utmost to meet these challenges, thereby fulfilling the needs of persons with disabilities.

Gary McPherson

Message From the Executive Director

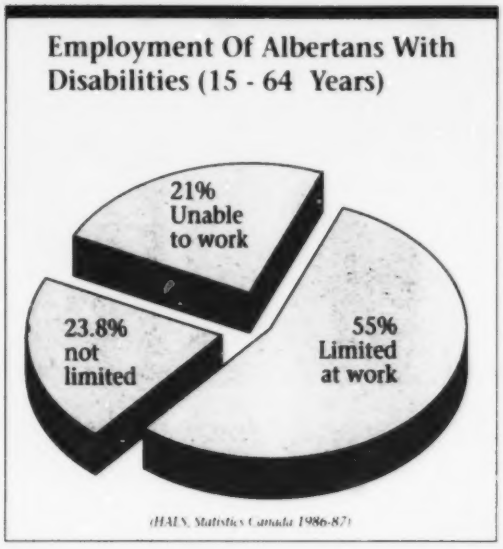
I am pleased to provide an overview of the activities of the Council for the year ending March 31, 1991; a more detailed account appears under activity highlights.

In March of 1990, the Council publicly released its *Action Plan*, and formally presented it to the Alberta Legislature through Premier Don Getty. The *Action Plan* was the result of a collaborative effort with consumers, families, agency and organization representatives and government officials. The document addresses ten major areas which present barriers to Albertans with disabilities in their efforts to achieve equality and independence. Since the document was first released, more than 15,000 copies have been circulated throughout the province and across Canada.

During the spring and summer of 1990 the Council held numerous meetings with senior officials from all departments to discuss the *Action Plan* and solicit departmental support for the recommendations addressed to their respective ministries. In response to Council's request for Cabinet support of the *Action Plan*, the Honourable Jim Dinning requested that all departments provide him with an official response to the *Action Plan*. Departmental responses were analyzed by Mr. Dinning's staff and a consolidated government response was presented to Cabinet for approval. A summary of government's response to the *Action Plan* is included in this Annual Report.

While the above strategies to gain broad support for the *Action Plan* were being implemented, Council was also engaged with individual departments to ensure that implementation strategies were being developed. These efforts were enhanced by a strong personal interest and commitment from the Premier who requested that all departments co-operate with the Council in finding innovative ways to begin implementation without delay. As a result, a number of departments worked with the Council to identify a number of short-term initiatives to include in the 1990-91 budget proposals. Again, these initiatives are highlighted in our report.

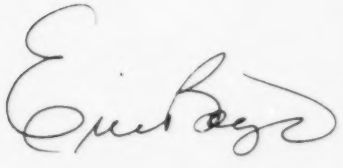
While the *Action Plan* did address a broad range of issues faced by Albertans with disabilities, we recognize that there are still a number of important areas requiring our attention. Of particular significance are services to aboriginal persons with disabilities, where the provincial government is only one of the jurisdictions involved. In January of 1991, under the leadership of Council Member Everett Soop, a Task Force was established to review all issues unique to aboriginal persons


Employment Of Albertans With Disabilities (15 - 64 Years)
21% Unable to work
23.8% not limited
55% Limited at work
(HALS, Statistics Canada 1986-87)

with disabilities, and to make recommendations to the appropriate leadership, including Indian governments, as well as provincial and federal governments. We expect the report from the Task Force to be released in early 1992.

Finally, the Premier's Council has continued to seek new ways to improve communications with consumers and stakeholders throughout Alberta. In February of 1991, we were fortunate to be able to hire Carol Chawrun as Director of Communications to assist us in developing future communication strategies. During the coming year we will explore the development of regional advisory committees and assist them in identifying regional issues which have not been addressed in the *Action Plan*. We are also beginning to recognize that ultimate success will be determined by the degree to which we can assist consumers and their representative organizations to become skilled advocates for Albertans with disabilities. In addition to our ongoing commitment to the implementation of the *Action Plan*, supporting and facilitating the development of advocacy skills in the community will become a Council priority.

I would like to join our chairperson, Gary McPherson, in expressing my sincere appreciation to Council members for their continuing support and direction; to our small, but dedicated staff for your outstanding contributions over the past year; to the many government officials who have demonstrated a willingness to work with our Council to bring about meaningful change; and last, but not least, to Albertans with disabilities and your many representative organizations for your valuable input and support. With continuing commitment of partnerships like these, the challenges of transformational change will be met.



Forging New Paths

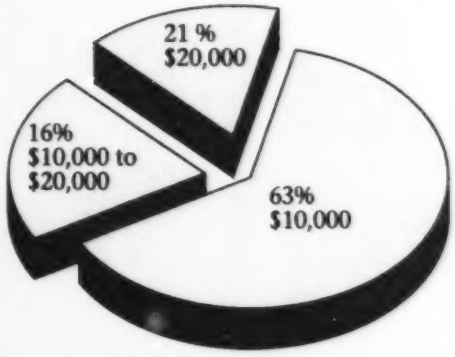
In 1985, Rick Hansen embarked on a journey that would forge new paths for people with disabilities. The enthusiastic young Canadian began his *Man in Motion* worldwide tour, covering more than 40,000 kilometers in just over two years.

Rick's achievement set the stage for an incredible increase in the awareness of the capabilities of, and issues surrounding, people with disabilities.

Here in Alberta, the B.C. native's accomplishment has not been forgotten. Towards the end of the tour, Rick wheeled his way through Edmonton, stopping along the way to meet with Premier Don Getty. This meeting brought forth a commitment from Premier Getty: he would establish a Premier's Council on the Status of Persons with Disabilities to demonstrate that he and his government were committed to the full and equal participation of all Albertans with disabilities in Alberta society.

A Steering Committee established in 1987 oversaw the development of a proposal leading to the establishment of the Premier's Council. The Committee carried out an intensive information gathering process. This ensured that individual consumers, their families, consumer groups and related professionals, along with agencies and government representatives, had input into the Committee's recommendations.

Yearly Income- Albertans With Disabilities (15+ years)

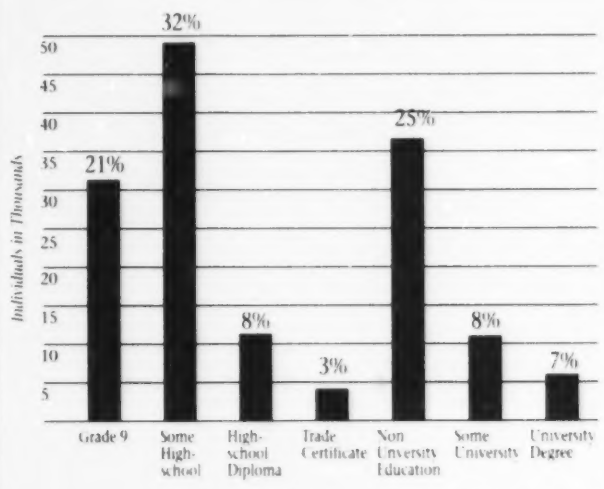


(HALS, Statistics Canada 1986-87)

Set up in late 1988, the Council exists to implement Premier Getty's commitment to the full participation of people with disabilities in the life of the province. To fulfil this commitment, the Council's Members and Secretariat work hard to change negative or paternalistic attitudes towards persons with disabilities. This transformation of attitudes is bringing about major changes to public policy, making it a lot less difficult for persons with disabilities to make informed decisions and assume personal control.

Now in the fourth year of its ten year mandate, the Premier's Council has accomplished a great deal. A paper entitled ***Towards a New Vision of Abilities in Alberta***, released in June 1989, was adopted by the provincial government and has since received wide acceptance among consumers, professionals and agencies.

Level Of Education Among Albertans With Disabilities (15 - 64 Years) *By Highest Level*



Note: Total of percentages may exceed 100% due to rounding.

The Council's most significant document to date, the *Action Plan*, was released in June 1990. Recommendations in the *Action Plan* address government policy in nine major areas, each area impacting on the lives of persons with disabilities. Already, many of the recommendations have been accepted and are having a significant impact on public policy.

Despite this success, Council Members know that forging new paths is not easy. It's a great challenge that requires the patience and dedication of many. For the Council, the task is made all the more challenging by the fact that its Members are determined to bring about fundamental changes to the system, rather than instant solutions that will not produce long-term results.

Yet such determination is paying off, and already there are higher levels of acceptance among persons with disabilities and non-disabled persons alike. All Albertans are learning that people with disabilities have a right to equality and full acceptance. These are the long-awaited positive changes that will continue as the Council pursues its mandate in the 1990s.

This Is Your Council

Rick Hansen
Honourary Chairperson

Rick Hansen's legacy began in 1987, with the completion of his world-wide tour that raised $23 million for spinal cord research, rehabilitation, wheelchair sports and awareness. In 1989 he was appointed Consultant on Disabilities to the President of the University of British Columbia and established the Disability Resource Centre at UBC. In 1990 he was the first incumbent of the Rick Hansen National Fellow Programme at UBC, an advocacy program for positive social change throughout the world for people with disabilities.

Gary McPherson
Chairperson

Gary McPherson has been extensively involved with persons with disabilities. Among other things, he is President of the Canadian Wheelchair Sports Association and Director and Vice-Chairman of the Canadian Federation of Sports Organizations of the Physically Disabled. He has served on numerous committees and has won awards for service to persons with disabilities. Mr. McPherson has used a wheelchair since the age of nine.

Peter Aubry
Council Member

Since June of 1975, Peter Aubry has been President of Aubry Consultants Ltd. Prior, he worked as a manager for Ingersoll Rand Canada, after receiving a B.Sc. in geology from Michigan Technological University. Mr. Aubry has a son with schizophrenia and has been involved with the Calgary Chapter of the Schizophrenia Society. He is now serving on the Mental Health Promotion Committee.

Harvey Ball
Council Member

Much of Harvey Ball's professional experience has been in construction, although he has also worked in real estate and brokerage sales. At present, he is Director and President of a family construction and development business. Mr. Ball has multiple sclerosis.

Kaye Brock
Council Member

In 1981, Kaye Brock began working with the Association for the Rehabilitation of the Brain Injured, serving as both President and Service Volunteer. Three years later, she assisted in the establishment of the Head Injured Relearning Society, of which she is now President. Ms. Brock is a founding member of the Head injury Association of Alberta and does volunteer work with various other community organizations.

Wendy Bryden
Council Member

Wendy Bryden has done volunteer work in teaching people with disabilities how to ski. While serving on the Board of Directors of the XV Olympic Winter Games Organizing Committee, she was responsible for the Disabled Skiing Exhibition featuring disabled skiers. Mrs. Bryden majored in journalism and recently authored ***Canada and the Olympic Winter Games***, one of four official Olympic books.

Cheryl Crocker
Council Member

With degrees in Special Education and Educational Psychology, Cheryl Crocker is head of the Rehabilitation Practitioner Program at Grant MacEwan Community College. Previous positions include working as a vocational counsellor for Minnesota Diversified Industries, and as Client Services Supervisor for Services for the Handicapped (Alberta Family and Social Services.)

Martin Goldstein
Council Member

Martin Goldstein is a teacher of hearing impaired children at the Queen Elizabeth High School in Calgary. He has a B.A. and an M.A. in Counselling of the Deaf. Upon completion of his degrees, he entered the Teacher Training of the Deaf Program at the University of Alberta in 1981. Prior to his current position, Mr. Goldstein served as Dean of Residence at the Alberta School for the Deaf from 1975 until 1981. Mr. Goldstein is deaf.

Ray Hegerat
Council Member

As a person with a learning disability, Ray Hegerat has experienced first-hand the frustrations of the education system at both the secondary and post-secondary levels. He received assistance from the Learning Disabled Programme at the University of Alberta and subsequently graduated with distinction from the Faculty of Education. Mr. Hegerat now teaches students with multiple disabilities at W.P. Wagner High School, Edmonton, and serves on the Committee for Disabled Students Policy at the University of Alberta.

Randy Hogle
Council Member

Randy Hogle is visually impaired and has been involved with the visual impaired community for some years. He is a Director of the Canadian National Institute for the Blind and a Director of Employment Services for the Physically Disabled. Mr. Hogle has been active with the Alberta Sport and Recreation Association for the blind. He has a B.A. and L.L.B. He articled with Field and Field and is now a partner with the law firm Hogle and Russell.

Sandy Morrice
Council Member

Sandy Morrice was born, raised and educated in Medicine Hat and has worked as a computer programmer at Canadian Forces Base, Suffield for the past eight years. He is a volunteer with the St. John Ambulance and has been very active in the Sledge Hockey and Ice Picking Association. As a result of a rail accident in 1974, Mr. Morrice has had one leg amputated.

Jean Packer
Council Member

Jean Packer has paralysis of all four limbs as a result of respiratory polio contracted in 1953. Mrs. Packer moved out of hospital when she married in 1973, and today enjoys acceptance as a housewife in rural Alberta. She is an active member of her community and has been a church treasurer, as well as a member of various church groups and the local library board.

Everett Soop
Council Member

Extensive involvement with issues related both to aboriginal people and to persons with disabilities has been a large part of Everett Soop's life. In the past, he has volunteered as a Board Member of the Alberta Indian Health Care Commission and as a Member of the Alberta Advisory Board for Recreation for the Disabled. Mr. Soop has acted as a resource person for various organizations and departments. Mr. Soop is presently chairing the Premier's Council Task Force on Issues for Aboriginal Persons with Disabilities. He has muscular dystrophy and is hard of hearing.

Norma Stasiuk
Council Member

Norma Stasiuk is a teacher in the Westlock School Division. During her teaching years, she has taught special education classes. In conjunction with the Education Response Centre in Edmonton, Mrs. Stasiuk is currently writing a handbook for teachers on how to adapt the regular curriculum for children with special learning needs in the classroom.

Jim Vargo
Council Member

Although Dr. Jim Vargo has dealt with a cross-section of people with physical disabilities, his main personal and professional interest is spinal cord injury. He holds a Ph.D. in counselling psychology, is Associate Dean of Rehabilitation Medicine at the University of Alberta and Editor-in-Chief of the Canadian Journal of Rehabilitation. Dr. Vargo has been, among other things, a member of the Board of Directors of the Canadian Paraplegic Association and the Board of Directors of the Easter Seal Ability Council.

Highlights from 1990-91

Following the March 1990 release of the *Action Plan*, the Premier's Council on the Status of Persons with Disabilities embarked on the major task of seeking provincial government commitment to implementation of *Action Plan* recommendations.

Council members held more than 30 media conferences and stakeholder meetings across the province during this fiscal year. The purpose was to bring about public awareness and support of the *Action Plan*. Meetings continued throughout the year

April

Council members held *Action Plan* discussion meetings with Premier Don Getty and Ministers and representatives from Departments of Tourism, Career Development and Employment, Family and Social Services, Culture and Multiculturalism, Recreation and Parks, Education, Transportation and Utilities, Health, and the Provincial Treasury.

May

Council met with Alberta Education representatives to review *Action Plan* recommendations and issues including accessibility, integration, funding, and teacher/parent resources. Throughout the month, Council wrote to community organizations and agencies, supporting and encouraging many recent initiatives to improve the quality of life for persons with disabilities.

June

Transportation and Utilities Minister Al Adair announced the establishment of the Advisory Committee for Barrier Free Transportation. Alberta Health called the first meeting of stakeholders to look at the continuum of services for persons with brain injury; also initiated a major review of Aids to Daily Living. Meetings with various government departments and stakeholders regarding *Action Plan*

concerns and related initiatives occurred. Such meetings continued throughout the year. Council addressed various meetings province-wide, and participated in panel discussions regarding *Action Plan* recommendations, and issues pertaining to persons with disabilities. Council issued three papers: a position paper responding to the provincial government's *Rainbow Report*, a position paper on Integration, and a response paper to the Brassard Committee Report *Claiming My Future*. Council participated in National Access Awareness Week celebrations. Council meeting held in Calgary.

July

Council met with representatives of the Alberta Hospital Association to discuss the role of the AHA and its members in shifting towards greater community-based service. Council met with a representative of the Disabled Student Services, University of Alberta, to discuss issues related to student services and admission policies.

August

Council and Glenrose Rehabilitation Hospital representatives met to discuss the possibility of making a presentation to hospital staff about the *Action Plan* and the Council's philosophy, and how the Glenrose could incorporate the Council's vision into their future activities. Representatives from Career Development and Employment and Family and Social Services met with Council to began discussions around operational issues involved in the transfer of vocational services from Family and Social Services to Career Development and Employment. Representatives of the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association (AUMA) and Council met to discuss the role of the AUMA in supporting the *Action Plan* and the possibility of the Premier's Council participating in the Association's 1991 annual conference.

September

The Advisory Committee on Barrier Free Transportation held its inaugural meeting. The committee reviewed *Action Plan* recommendations and discussed the roles of other levels of government and industry in providing an infrastructure and services for people with disabilities. Council met with a Centre for Career Development Innovation representative to discuss the preparation of an employment equity course for Government of Alberta employees. Council gave a

presentation at a Social Awareness/Sensitivity Seminar for hospitality industry employees at Marmot Lodge, Jasper. Chamber of Commerce and Alberta Tourism representatives, and persons with physical, hearing and visual impairments also participated. Council meeting held in Edmonton.

October

Council met with an Income Support Services representative regarding the Council's position on proposed Social Allowance reforms. Council attended various conferences, seminars and meetings that relate to issues for persons with disabilities. Council reviewed Career Development and Employment's departmental policy statement regarding Albertans facing barriers to employment.

November

Council attended many meetings with organizations and associations to discuss issues of mutual interest. Council attended a Canada Employment and Immigration workshop to discuss proposed changes to the Canada Employment Equity Act.

December

Representatives of the Edmonton Public School Board and Council met and discussed *Action Plan* issues related to integration and employment equity. Council responded to the Glenrose Rehabilitation Hospital's strategic planning document.

January

Council reviewed drafts of new curriculum programs in Tourism Studies and Enterprise and Innovation courses for Alberta Education. Council was asked by Advanced Education to review a report entitled *Facilitating Communication for Post-Secondary Students with Impaired Hearing.*

February

Council representatives attended a joint meeting in Red Deer between the Premier's Council, Alberta Council on Aging, and the Seniors Advisory Council for Alberta to develop mutual understanding of common goals for seniors and persons with disabilities. Council met with Dr. Peter Meekison, Vice President Academic, University of Alberta. Topics discussed included employment equity, student services and teacher preparation.

March

Council participated in a meeting of Alberta Education's Integration *Action Plan* Advisory Committee, which will advise Alberta Education in the development of an *Action Plan* to support policy on integration in schools. Council established a Task Force on Issues for Aboriginal Persons with Disabilities. Council member Everett Soop was named Chairperson of the Task Force. The Task Force draws its membership from aboriginal people living in rural and urban centres, with added representatives from the Alberta Indian Health Care Commission and the provincial and federal governments. Council meeting held in Edmonton.

The Year in Review

Fiscal year 1990-91 has been both a busy and successful year for the Premier's Council. By far the most important task facing Council Members and the Secretariat was that of educating members of the provincial government and other stakeholders on the importance of the Premier's Council *Action Plan*, released in March, 1990. Council Members were successful at this task and much has happened in the area of *Action Plan* recommendation implementation.

Action Plan - Change through Consultation

The *Action Plan* is a comprehensive document that presents 55 recommendations addressing public policy in ten different areas. They are: training, employment, education, transportation, recreation, housing, accessibility, personal supports, financial supports, and information.

The purpose of this portion of the Year in Review is not to reiterate the recommendations contained in the *Action Plan*, but rather to highlight the recommendations that have or are being addressed by Department Ministers, policy analysts and program managers.

Training

> ***Action Plan objective** - By immediately developing and pursuing a more comprehensive and aggressive policy on post- secondary education and training for persons with disabilities, a shift in labour force participation will occur to closely approximate the general workforce participation rates by the year 1995.*

Training includes both vocational and non-vocational training. There is an emphasis on training for employment to allow persons with disabilities to participate equitably in the job market.

Training, as the *Action Plan* points out, is the key to employment, and employment is one key to empowerment. Therefore, "a more coordinated, consolidated and aggressive approach to provision of training is imperative if persons with disabilities are going to acquire the skills and qualifications to contribute both economically and socially in the community."

The *Action Plan* presents ten recommendations addressing training needs. They are addressed to Alberta Career Development and Employment, Alberta Family and Social Services, and Alberta Advanced Education.

To date, as a result of the recommendations:

- An appeal policy for the Vocational Rehabilitation of Disabled Persons program is now in place. There is more emphasis on regional decision making.
- Recipients of Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped (AISH) are now eligible for training programs.
- The Alberta Students' Finance Board examined the level of support available for students. As a result, the level of support for persons with disabilities has increased.
- An Interdepartmental Adult Student Aid Committee has been established to co-ordinate provincial policy development and delivery of student aid. The committee is examining the coordination of support for disadvantaged students.
- Council met with representatives from Career Development and Employment and Family and Social Services to discuss operational issues involved in the transfer of vocational services from Family and Social Services to Career Development and Employment.

Employment

***Action Plan objective** - Increase the labour force participation rate and the employment rate of persons with disabilities to more closely approximate that of the general population by 1995. Equitable representation of persons with disabilities at all earning levels by the year 2000.*

Most of us know the sense of achievement when a job is well done. Persons with disabilities have the same need for success and achievement, yet are unemployed in vast numbers. Unemployment means that persons with disabilities have lower incomes.

The *Action Plan* states that in order to improve labour force participation and reduce unemployment, policies must be developed and implemented on provincial employment equity and provision of supports needed to access and maintain employment. In total, the *Action Plan* presents seven recommendations in the area of employment. To date, as a result of the recommendations:

- Alberta Economic Development and Trade has a new pilot program, Ability Plus, which is intended to increase business opportunities for entrepreneurs who have been economically disadvantaged by their disabilities. Persons with disabilities can access financial aid and business expertise in order to start a new business or expand an existing enterprise.
- Alberta Career Development and Employment has begun the development of a support for employment policy. It will address the identification of the range of supports necessary for persons with disabilities to secure and maintain employment.

Education

> ***Action Plan objective*** *- By the year 2000, all Alberta children will have, as their right, access in their home communities, in their neighbourhood schools, to the same quality of education which is available to all other students.*

In Alberta, children are guaranteed access to the education system and to a program addressing their unique needs. However, a number of barriers exist that prevent children with disabilities from fulfilling their potential and attaining "equal status, personal contribution and inherent worth" (Premier's Council, first principle).

There are many issues that the seven recommendations in the education section of the *Action Plan* attempt to address. Issues such as fragmented and uncoordinated services, inadequate teacher preparation and support, integration, and parental choice are long-standing.

Action Plan recommendations emphasize integration as the first option. Therefore, other recommendations focus on related issues, such as accessibility of schools, improvements in the assessment and appeals processes and support for teachers. So far:

- A special education review was undertaken in January, 1990 by the Minister of Education. A steering committee and three technical committees were struck. They are examining funding, co-ordination of services and outcome indicators in special education. The first phase ended in June, 1990 with the release of a discussion paper.
- In its review, Alberta Education is addressing standards for developing, evaluating and monitoring special education programs and student performance outcomes. The review is recommending that specific performance standards be established for students with disabilities.

- The review is also examining funding allocations to school boards. Total expenditures for special education and the extent of local contribution are being reviewed.
- Alberta Education policy has been revised to ensure the acceptance of all children with disabilities in the age group served by an Early Childhood Services operator. Where younger children cannot be accommodated, operators should assist parents in finding an alternative.
- Alberta Education will work with the Alberta Teachers' Association and Alberta Advanced Education to better equip teachers to educate disabled persons. The department has developed an Individual Program Plan kit, and workshops are being held in school jurisdictions on the development of Individual Program Plans and managing the needs of behaviour disordered children.
- A testing and assessment handbook and teachers' guide to help identify and respond to socially, emotionally or psychologically "at risk" students has been completed.
- Individual Program Plans are mandatory for all special needs students. The development, implementation and review of Individual Program Plans should involve a multi-disciplinary team of professionals as well as parents or guardians. Parents and, if possible, students should be involved in the decision making process.

Recreation

Action Plan objective *- To create full accessibility to all publicly funded recreation facilities and leisure pursuits by the year 2000, so that every Albertan has an equitable opportunity to improve the quality of his or her life through pursuit of recreational and leisure activities of choice.*

The key issue within the area of recreation is that of integration/segregation and accessibility of facilities and events in the areas of culture, recreation and sports. The Council recommended that Alberta Recreation and Parks develop a policy on barrier free design and access to all publicly funded parks and recreation facilities by 1991. So far, developments are:

- Education of policy development personnel regarding disabilities other than mobility impairments (for example, visual and hearing). The provincial government is now assessing improvements for hearing impaired people at museums and auditoria.

- Meetings with recreation providers are enhancing their understanding of inclusion of persons with disabilities.
- The Council is continually encouraging facilities across Alberta to focus on improved accessibility for persons with disabilities.
- The department is committed to a new policy on barrier free accessibility to facilities.

Transportation

> ***Action Plan objective** - Barrier free transportation systems within the province that meet transportation needs for local and intraprovincial travel, as well as barrier free pedestrian environments within municipalities, by the year 2000.*

The ability to move freely within a community is a human right, and perhaps something that non-disabled persons take for granted because of our publicly funded roads, sidewalks and transportation systems. The province's Individual's Rights Protection Act states that no person should be denied services or facilities customarily available to the public. Yet this is often the case for persons with disabilities when it comes to transportation and freedom of movement.

Therefore, the *Action Plan* recommends that the provincial government examine various options to meet the transportation needs of Albertans with disabilities, including adapted private vehicles and accessible transit systems. As a result of the seven recommendations:

- A Barrier Free Transportation Advisory Committee was established in June, 1990 and a co-ordinator appointed in August, 1990. The committee is charged with the task of formulating a transportation and mobility policy statement.
- Alberta Transportation and Utilities and the Advisory Committee on Barrier Free Transportation are working together to ensure accessibility of all transportation systems and pedestrian environments under the jurisdiction of municipalities.
- Amendments to the Highway Traffic Act, which would permit enforcement of designated parking for persons with disabilities, have been drafted.
- A review of services provided by municipalities using provincial transportation grants for persons with disabilities and seniors has been undertaken and will assist the department in determining future grant programs.

Housing

***Action Plan objective** - By the year 2000, persons with disabilities will have the same range of accessible and affordable housing options that other Albertans accept as their right.*

In some ways, shelter issues for persons with disabilities are similar to those for non-disabled Albertans. However, the situation is complicated by the fact that many persons with disabilities have insufficient income to meet their shelter needs. In addition, some people with disabilities must have their homes modified to meet their special needs.

The four recommendations in the *Action Plan* focus on improved accessibility, changes in rent subsidies, and increased availability of transitional housing. As a result of the recommendations:

- The Housing Divisions of Alberta Municipal Affairs are working with individuals and organizations to develop a draft housing policy and to identify a broad range of shelter options necessary to meet the needs of persons with disabilities.
- The Housing Divisions will set up and participate in a cross-disability advisory committee to address policy issues related to housing for persons with disabilities.
- The Housing Divisions are working with the existing housing registries and other groups representing people with disabilities to review the feasibility of establishing a cross-disability provincial housing registry. The Divisions are prepared to review the income guidelines along with interest groups, from time to time, to ensure that those in need are being served.

Accessibility

***Action Plan objective** - Improve barrier free design and enforcement standards that will ensure that all new public buildings and external built environments such as sidewalks and parking areas are completely accessible to all persons with disabilities by the year 1996.*

Access to all public buildings is once again another right that non-disabled persons take for granted. Yet often persons with disabilities are unable to access such buildings because of architectural barriers. The provincial building code contains provisions for removal of these barriers.

The Alberta Building Code was open for revision in 1990, and the Council placed strong emphasis on government adopting recommendations of the Barrier Free Design Committee. Alberta Labour is encouraged to improve enforcement of barrier free design requirements through education and certification of inspectors. So far:

- Sixteen changes listed in the *Action Plan* have been implemented so far. These changes affect the Alberta Building Code, accessibility and parking guidelines. Alberta Education developed guidelines to assist school jurisdictions to provide school buildings that are barrier free.
- The Department of Public Works, Supplies and Services will assess all government owned/leased buildings, developing plans for retrofiting where necessary.

Personal Supports

***Action Plan objective** - A comprehensive personal supports unit that is capable of meeting the support needs of persons with disabilities, regardless of their age or stage of life, to be developed by April 1, 1992.*

The biggest single issue in the area of personal supports is the large number of support and technical programs, each with different eligibility criteria. Various services are accessed through Alberta Health, Alberta Family and Social Services, and Alberta Career Development and Employment, causing confusion and frustration for consumers. The Council believes that persons with disabilities should have access to a co-ordinated, consistent and effective delivery system.

Another issue related to the present set up is critical gaps in services. The Council believes that more comprehensive provision of supports and the development of needed day programs will combine to reduce the demand for long-term care beds.

Therefore, the Council recommends the establishment of a single unit that would serve persons with disabilities, regardless of age, or the purpose for which assistance is required. A total of nine recommendations have been made in the area of personal supports. To date:

- An interdepartmental task force, the Community Supports Unit Task Force, has been established with representatives from Education, Career Development and Employment, Health, Family and Social Services, Advanced Education, Municipal Affairs, Culture and Multiculturalism, Transportation and Utilities and the Premier's Council. The Task Force will develop a vision of the Unit, time frames and a plan for transfer of resources, to be approved by Cabinet.

- The Mental Health Division of Alberta Health has developed a paper, *New Directions for Mental Health Services in Alberta*, that is intended to communicate the guiding policy for the further development of the province's mental health system.
- Alberta Health is completing a consultative planning process with stakeholders about the needs of persons with brain injuries.
- Alberta Family and Social Services is examining ways to assist persons with mental disability wishing to move from institution to community.

Financial Supports

***Action Plan objective** - A revamped income support system that renews its commitment to the dignity and independence of persons with severe disabilities by 1992.*

An ongoing issue for persons with disabilities is that of income. Lack of education and employment skills, coupled with severe disability for some people means on-going dependence on the government for financial support. Therefore, the government created the Assured Income for Severely Handicapped (AISH) program.

At present, there are just over 16,000 people receiving AISH in Alberta. The program, when established, was designed to provide financial assistance that was more generous than Social Allowance to acknowledge the extra costs associated with disability, and the inability of most recipients to earn extra money. This was comparable to allowances received by senior citizens in Alberta. However, in recent years the gap between AISH and seniors' benefits has widened.

The *Action Plan* calls for improved levels of support along with transitional medical benefits for those who become able to work, but do not have access to equivalent medical benefits. So far:

- The Provincial government has increased AISH by $35 a month.
- The government has established an AISH/Vocational Rehabilitation of Disabled Persons assessment project to provide co-ordinated assessment services to applicants for AISH. The project ensures that clients are aware of all training and rehabilitation options.

Information

***Action Plan objective** - To establish by 1992 a province-wide disability-related information network to meet the needs of persons with disabilities, their families and other stakeholders.*

It was pointed out in the Personal Supports section that the provincial government offers a multitude of programs and support services. Unfortunately, there is no one source of information that can be easily accessed about these programs and the many others available.

Without access to information, people with disabilities can fail to make use of the many programs and services available. The *Action Plan* recommends the development of Alberta Information Network (AIN) to meet this important need.

- The Alberta Centre for Well Being has agreed to assist in its development, and provide administrative support. The Premier's Council has provided all computer hardware necessary for development of a database and operation of the first three information centres. A full-time project manager is co-ordinating the development of the project.

Public Education -Changing Attitudes in Alberta

Council work on promoting the Action Plan and efforts towards public education, including government, were naturally intertwined in 1990-91.

Council attended numerous meetings, workshops and presentations throughout the province to discuss issues affecting persons with disabilities. They have been active participants at conferences primarily as a result of *Action Plan* recommendations and the impact that the Plan is having on various government departments and community agencies. Many of these activities are noted in the year's highlights.

In addition, the Council held regular Council meetings and held forums with various community agencies. In May 1990, the Council was represented at the Second Joint meeting of Advisory Councils in Quebec City. Council had the opportunity to exchange information and discuss common disability issues with representatives from across Canada. Alberta will be hosting the 1991 Joint Meeting of Advisory Councils in December.

Council newsletter *Status Report* is published quarterly and more than 5,000 copies distributed to a wide variety of consumers and stakeholders. *Status Report* acts as a vehicle for disseminating information, news, and issues for discussion or debate.

Premier's Council On The Status Of Persons With Disabilities
Statement Of Expenditures Year Ended March 31, 1991 / Unaudited

	Authorized	Expended	Unexpended (Overexpended)
Manpower			
Salaries- Permanent	121,300.00	75,124.92	46,175.08
Salaries - Non-permanent	-	108,681.10	(108,681.10)
Contract Employees	144,400.00	83,036.49	61,363.51
Employer Contributions	38,800.00	20,051.83	18,748.17
Allowance & Benefits	1,800.00	4,672.68	(2,872.68)
Total Manpower	**306,300.00**	**291,567.02**	**14,732.98**
Supplies and Services			
Travel Expenses	86,000.00	61,669.47	24,330.53
Advertising	10,000.00	3,292.02	6,706.98
Freight and Postage	26,000.00	22,152.95	3,847. 05
Rentals	6,000.00	5,825.85	174.15
Telephone and Comm.	4,000.00	4,923.58	(923.58)
Repair & Maintenance	5,000.00	4,022.11	977.89
Contract Services	226,200.00	260,320.66	(34,120.66)
Data Processing Services	5,000.00	-	5,000.00
Hosting	9,000.00	4,415.09	4,584.91
Other Purchased Services	-	18,315.53	(18,315.53)
Materials and Supplies	27,500.00	19,512.65	7,987.35
Total Supplies and Services	**404,700.00**	**404,450.91**	**249.09**
Fixed Assets			
Dessing Equipment	16,000.00	13,878.00	2,122.00
Total Fixed Assts	**16,000.00**	**13,878.00**	**2,122.00**
Total Expenditure 90/91	**727,000.00**	**709,895.93**	**17,104.07**

prepared by Financial Operations as of July 8, 1991